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THE RAIN SPIRIT.

See! The night without is very lonely,
Moon and stars and all their luminous train have fled;
Darkness rules the earth, and darkness only;
Rain-drops fall like tears above the dead;
Yet in many voices
Comes a sweet refrain,
The utterance of a spirit sad but tender—
The Spirit of the Rain.

Weary seems the Spirit; his accents falling
Well might be the language grief and pain employ;
Yet with voice of wailing he is ever calling
On the distant future for benisons of joy:
Though its tones are mournful,
Sweet may be the strain;
Wondrous are his tidings, though the tones breathe sadness—
The Spirit of the Rain.

Gentle is his mission: through the brown earth stealing,
Seeking there the tiny seeds that grow to perfect flowers;
To their dreary prison the Spirit goes revealing
The glorious resurrection that comes with sun-fed hours—
Bids them wait in patience
Summer's royal reign;
Of a world transfigured, low the Spirit whispers—
The Spirit of the Rain.

Drawn are all the curtains; close and warm our dwelling;
From the glowing fireside no restless footsteps roam;
For the Spirit's accents to our cold hearts are telling
The secret of the fireside, the wondrous charm of home;
Listen to the story
Told upon the pane,
Told like sweetest music by a Heaven-born spirit—
The Spirit of the Rain.

—Mary E. Vandyne, in Harper's Bazar.

CONSUELO.

An "Angel of Sorrow" and an "Angel of Joy."

It is about ten o'clock p. m., the hour when life in its lightest and most frivolous form is on parade in the upper part of the city's great artery of traffic—Broadway.

Madison Square is brilliant with a thousand lights; the great hotels are thronged with idle groups, while up and down the sidewalks continues the steady stream of foot passengers which will not diminish much before midnight. The crowd upon the pavements and in the hotels is frequently augmented for a few minutes by persons leaving the theaters in the vicinity during the entr'acte for an airing, refreshments or cigars.

The crowd on promenade is a motley one, composed for the most part of well-dressed men and women, and from the animated tones and gestures, the gay jests and light laughter, distinguishable above the steady tramp of feet, the rattling of cab-wheels and the jingling of car-bells, one might think that care rested but lightly up on the shoulders of most who are here.

Among the crowd of busy talkers, thoughtless idlers and devotees of pleasure, walking at a leisurely pace and with a thoughtful air, comes a man whose genius has already made his name a household word in many lands. It is Geoffrey Vail, the artist. The handsome, scholarly face, with its delicate, white complexion, its large, soft, black eyes and sweeping black mustache which fringes his sensitive mouth, his graceful carriage and the plain but faultless style of his attire, stamp him easily as a man of superior type, even to those who do not recognize in the lone individual the well-known figure of metropolitan life.

Above the jargon of sounds in the streets rise occasionally from a side street the tones of a piano-organ, accompanied by the voice of a person singing some Italian songs. The artist pauses for a moment to listen to the unusual pathetic ring of this voice, and as he approaches it is struck by the appearance of the singer. It is a young girl, about sixteen years of age, with a Madonna-like face touched with a look of most exquisite sorrow. Is it possible that the coarse-looking Italian yonder can have any connection with this lovely child? It is not of this the artist thinks as he lingers, throwing coins into the old man's hat. It is of how that lovely face would look on canvas!

Suddenly the girl sees his ardent gaze and her eyes droop to the ground, while a color like the first blush of sunrise mantles her cheek. The artist is yet more charmed, although he diverts his gaze, still following the couple from street to street.

Finally the organ is closed up and the two performers prepare to go home. Geoffrey Vail approaches the Italian as he is about to go and touches him upon the shoulder.

"Is it your daughter?" he asks, pointing to the girl.

The man nods his head.

"I am an artist and would like to paint her picture," said Geoffrey.

The man shook his head in disapproval.

"If you will allow her to come to my studio every day for a month I will pay you liberally."

"How much?" asked the man, gruffly.

"One hundred dollars," answered the artist, after a moment's reflection.

"She would earn me more than that with the organ."

"Then we will say two hundred."

The man's greed was satisfied, and he consented to the terms.

"When shall we commence?"

"To-morrow, if it suits you," said the artist.

"Very well," answered the man, and Geoffrey handed him his card.

Geoffrey turned homeward, pleased with his discovery. For a long time he had meditated painting a series of pictures representing the emotions.

"Here is my 'Angel of Sorrow' idealized already," he said to himself as he pursued his way through the still crowded throughfare home.

The pretty Italian found Geoffrey Vail in his studio awaiting her visit on the following day.

The strong light in the studio, where the curtains were purposely drawn back, revealed to the artist that he had not been deceived with regard to her appearance. The face was delicate, refined and indescribably sad.

She had evidently put on her best clothes—a dress of some soft black stuff, and a shawl of the same sable hue wrapped round her head and shoulders.

"You have posed as a model before?" asked Geoffrey, noting the artistic effect of this simple costume.

"No," said the girl, "never before."

"What is your name?" asked the artist.

"Consuelo."

"Consuelo," repeated the artist, "and you look inconsolable."

The girl did not understand his remark, but her large, dark eyes were turned upon him wonderingly.

"Well, Consuelo, we must make the best of our time," said the artist. "Come, I will arrange you as I wish you to sit," and he placed a chair for her, arranging with some care her attitude and drapery.

"You do not feel timid, do you?" asked Geoffrey, kindly.

"Oh, no," answered the girl, looking at him with wonder again. It was inconceivable to her that she should feel timid in his presence.

The grave, gentle face of the artist had won her confidence completely. Accustomed to rough looks, sometimes blows, the child seemed in the atmosphere of this elegant studio to breathe the air of paradise.

But the look of sorrow did not leave her face; it was too deeply imprinted there.

Geoffrey was soon busy with his pencil. An artist, his soul was full of art. To him the animate beauty was only a stepping-stone to the inanimate, every thing lovely created that it might be copied on the canvas and immortalized.

Consuelo's sitting was not a long one.

He thought it best not to tire her too much the first day, and at the end of the third hour rose from his easel and, thanking her, dismissed her till the morrow.

"You will come again, won't you?" said Geoffrey.

The girl's look answered him.

For the first time that she could remember Consuelo went to her miserable home happy. A new vista had been opened to her. She had caught a glimpse of another world with which she seemed to feel some strange kinship.

How gladly those days glided by while the angel of sorrow, half real and half the creation of the artist's superb fancy, grew upon the canvas.

The last sitting came. Artist and model were to part.

Geoffrey, who had grown familiar with the child, took her hand in his own when he bade her adieu. Suddenly Consuelo burst into tears.

The artist himself felt unexpectedly and strangely moved. Even to him the parting seemed painful. Why? Blind egotism! unknown to himself he had learned to love. Only at this crisis did the truth dimly dawn upon him. But why those tears of hers? Strange infatuation! Then the child must love him also.

She then turned away to weep.

"Consuelo," he said, gravely, "come here."

Consuelo came at his bidding.

"Look at me straight in the face."

"I can not," she sobbed.

"Consuelo, why do you weep?"

The face could be doubted no longer except by the blind.

Geoffrey folded her tenderly in his arms, unresisted. The lovely head rested upon his bosom. His lips were pressed to the blushing cheek.

"Consuelo, would you like to stay here always—to be my wife?" he said, rather nervously, half frightened himself.

The girl looked at him and seemed to make some sudden resolve.

Withdrawing herself from his embrace, she wiped her eyes, and then without another word or look fled from the studio.

"She is frightened, but I must follow her," said the artist. How soon she had become infinitely precious to him! He hastened to the door, but no trace of Consuelo could be seen. He paused to reflect. He did not know even her address. The Italian had already called for his money. How should he find her? What strange impulse had caused her to turn and fly so sudden? It was inexplicable, but he must find a key to the mystery. How? Would she not return to her old avocation, accompanying the organ? If he searched the streets for a few days he would soon find her again.

But days, weeks and months rolled by; and no trace of Consuelo or the Italian rewarded his anxious search.

So his passion died away into a vague and hopeless regret. Nothing remained of Consuelo but the blending of her beauty with his own dreams in the picture. So he devoted himself with renewed ardor to his favorite pursuits. The "Angel of Sorrow" was completed; extravagant offers were made for it, but the picture was not for sale. Money could not buy it.

It was hung in the artist's own studio—his greatest achievement—and many wondered as they gazed upon the sorrowful face whence came the inspiration for it.

Geoffrey Vail received many visitors at his studio. Wealthy patrons and personal friends brought others often to see the great artist's works, often sadly interrupting him when he wished to be alone, but always courteously received.

Five years had gone by since his brief love-dream had its sudden birth and tragic finale.

His gentle face had grown gentler, and, perhaps, a tinge of sadness crept in between the handsome lines; but he had little to complain of so far as success was concerned.

He is busy in his studio when some callers are announced. They are foreigners, evidently, from their names. Geoffrey glances carelessly at the card, and, not recognizing the names, is about to excuse himself, but suddenly changes his mind.

His visitors are shown into the studio.

A gentleman, refined and distinguished in appearance, and a lady some years his junior. A white vail partly secluded the lady's face.

Geoffrey bows politely, and advances to meet them as they are announced. The gentleman, speaking in French, apologizes for their intrusion and asks permission to look at some of the artist's work, and the lady, who has observed the artist's favorite picture, leads her companion toward it. After viewing it for some minutes and exchanging remarks of admiration in their own tongue, the gentleman, turning to Geoffrey, asks him if the picture can be purchased.

"On no consideration," replied the artist. "It is reserved at a price which even the most extravagant would never care to go to."

"Which means that you do not care to sell it?" replied the visitor.

The artist bowed in acquiescence.

"And did you ever see a face which suggested such beauty?" asked his visitor, adding: "Pardon me, but I have a purpose in inquiring."

"I have seen one," replied the artist, "with which this creation of mine could but feebly compare."

As he said this his eyes caught the face of the lady, who had removed her vail.

"Consuelo!" cried the artist, forgetting his visitors for a moment.

But they were smiling at him pleasantly.

"Pardon me," he said. "Some fancied resemblance compeled me to utter that name."

The lady approached nearer to him.

"Do you remember me, then?" she said, softly.

The artist looked puzzled and perplexed.

"Surely it is Consuelo; but, pardon me, you have changed your name." And he glanced significantly at her companion. "Ah! and you are no more the 'Angel of Sorrow;' you might now pose for the 'Angel of Joy.'"

Consuelo seemed to enjoy his perplexity. "And have you not found a true Consuelo also?" she asked, laughingly.

The artist shook his head sadly.

"Papa, this is Mr. Vail," said Consuelo, turning to her companion, who offered his hand to Geoffrey with a pleasant smile.

"You are wondering what it all means," said Consuelo, also smiling; "but it's a long story; papa will tell you while I look at some pictures around the studio, and if you wish to repeat the question you asked so long ago, which I never answered, repeat it to him."

The story was briefly told.

Consuelo had been kidnapped from her home in Italy and shipped to New York. After many years she had been traced and returned to her parents. She had fled from Geoffrey's presence because ashamed of her humble origin and parentage, believing her padrone to be her father, and had been rescued immediately afterward.

In Italy she had been educated, previously exacting a promise from her father that as soon as her education was completed he would bring her to New York.

Such a story could have but one sequel—a happy marriage. It was assuredly a happy one, and soon after it Geoffrey commenced the twin picture. —N. Y. Mercury.

GOING TO SEE A MAN.

The Origin of a Popular Sentence in the Language of Slang.

One night in the winter of 1865 Artemus Ward lectured at Lincoln Hall, and when the great humorist was about half through his discourse he paralyzed the audience with the announcement that they would have to take a recess of fifteen minutes so as to enable him to go across the street to "see a man." H. R. Tracy, then editor of the Washington Republican, was in the audience, and seeing an opportunity to improve upon the joke penciled the following lines and sent them to the platform:

"Dear Artemus: If you will place yourself under my guidance I'll take you to 'see a man' without crossing the street."

Artemus accepted the invitation, and while the great audience impatiently, but with much amusement, awaited the reappearance of the humorist, the latter was making the acquaintance of Aman and luxuriating at a well-laden refreshment board. Of course every body "caught on to" the phrase, and men became fond of getting up between the acts and "going out to see Aman." The restaurateur's business from this time forward boomed. Men who would ordinarily sit quietly through an entertainment and behave themselves allowed themselves to be influenced by contagion.—Washington Letter.

—There is a reason for all things, and the small boy always wants to know it.—Somerville Journal.

A BANQUET OF DEATH.

One of the Most Thrilling Episodes Recorded in Japanese History.

During the civil war in Japan that broke out upon the death of the Shogun (military Emperor) Nobunago, in the closing years of the sixteenth century, occurred the following incident. Shibata, brother-in-law to the dead Shogun, had espoused the cause of the latter's son, Nobutaku, against the designs of the unscrupulous Hideyoshi, the Japanese Napoleon Bonaparte of that age. The fortunes of war turned against Nobutaku, and his gallant General, Shibata, was compeled to retreat through the mountains into his own province, and shut himself up with some five hundred of his faithful vassals in his ancestral castle at Fukui. Hideyoshi, breathing out vengeance against the enemy who had so long defied him, followed in hurried pursuit, and, pitching his camp on Atago mountain before the castle of Shibata, vowed never to remove it hence until he had the head of his foe.

Day after day the siege was pressed closer and closer, and Shibata and his brave little garrison found it more and more difficult to repulse the furious assaults of their enemies, who outnumbered them twenty to one. To the danger from the foe without the walls was soon added the horrible prospect of starvation within. Finally, finding his case altogether hopeless, Shibata called together the surviving remnant of his little band and thus addressed them:

"My beloved followers, it often behooves the warrior to choose between death with glory and life with ignominy; between honorable self-destruction and captivity in the hands of an insolent foe. Our fortunes have brought us to the necessity of making such a choice. Only three things are possible—to remain here and starve like dogs, to sally out to battle and court death from hostile weapons, or to destroy ourselves as becomes brave soldiers who would die by their own swords rather than by those of the enemy."

With one accord the retainers raised their voice for *hara-kiri*, or suicide. That night Shibata had a splendid banquet prepared from the provisions still left, and he ordered the men to saturate the wood-work of the castle with oil, and to heap up piles of combustible material in the lower rooms. When all was in readiness the women within the castle were called, and Shibata said to his wife: "You and the other women may now quietly pass through the gates, and under cover of the night, it is possible you can escape detection by our foes. We shall remain here to die, as becomes the lords and retainers of the house of Shibata."

Then the sister of Nobunago, with a spirit that was as brave as that of her husband, speaking for herself and the other women, said to her lord: "I, too, am sprung from a lineage no less noble than that of my husband. Why, then, should he deny to me and my women the honor he and his retainers have planned for themselves? A thousand times to be preferred is the privilege of dying at the hands of those that love us, than the possibility of falling into the power of Hideyoshi's butchers."

At midnight the sentinels were called off from the walls, and all assembled in a large upper room of the castle. Here was served the banquet that had been prepared. The doomed little company ate, and drank, and danced, and sang songs of defiance to their foes. At a signal from Shibata, the servants below fired the castle in a score of places, and at the same instant the warriors sprang to their feet, and the women, chanting their death-song, received the dirks of their husbands and fathers into their hearts. Then, while the lights from their burning castle, that turned the night into day, revealed to Shibata and his retainers the camp of the besieging army on the wooded heights of Atago, they raised their voices together in one wild cry of defiant hate to the foe whose anticipated vengeance they had balked. This was the last sound that Hideyoshi and his astonished soldiers heard from the castle, for each of the little band, kneeling on the floor in grim and terrible silence, died the coveted death of the vanquished warrior—that of the dreadful *hara-kiri*.—N. Y. Ledger.

An Exclusive Person.

On one occasion a lady called and presented a check which she wished cashed. As she was a perfect stranger to the paying teller he said politely: "Madam, you will have to bring some one to introduce you before we can cash this check."

Drawing herself up quite haughtily she said, freezingly: "But I do not want to know you, sir!"—Richmond Dispatch.

—Of all the historical garments which crowd the great museums of the world none are more famous than the "gray overcoat" and "chapeau" of Napoleon I, celebrated in Beranger's and Raffet's poems, and painted by scores of aspiring French artists. At a recent search through the archives of the time of the great conqueror the tailor's and the hatter's account for some of these articles of clothing has been found, and it appears that for each of his "chapeaux castor" he paid sixty francs, while his "redingotes grises" cost him 160 francs apiece. The overcoats were always made very wide, for, contrary to the custom of the officers of that period, Napo never took off his epaulets.

PITH AND POINT.

—The angler who catches the smallest fish tells the biggest lies.

—Stilts are no better in conversation than in a foot-race.—Century.

—There are men whose friends are more to be pitied than their enemies.

—He who is most slow in making a promise is the most faithful in the performance of it.

—To the prosperous, the whole of life is short; but, to the unfortunate, one night is an endless time.

—There is no use trying to strike an average on honesty. The article must be simon pure or it is spurious.

—Other people's tongues will make you miserable, but it will not mend matters for your tongue to make them miserable.

—It is said that a man is judged by the company he keeps, but more frequently he is judged by the company he does not keep.—Boston Transcript.

—If men would say all that they think and leave unsaid we would discover philosophers in fools and vice versa—very much vice versa.—Merchant Traveler.

—A good story is told of the Indians, who replied when a missionary asked them if they were willing to abstain from work on Sunday: "Yes, and not only on Sunday, but on all other days as well!"

—Loose and light principles, like your loose straw hat, will show you which way the wind blows. You may have to chase them yet, or go bareheaded. Perhaps you and they will end in the mud.—Christian Standard.

—If the young man who took the medal should take the "big head" and relax in his efforts he will never take any thing else worth any thing. This is for no particular young man, but it may fit somewhere.—Christian Advocate.

—Thoroughness and truth are pretty much the same in their essential element; and people who allow themselves to shuffle away anyhow, and smooth over hastily, to the eye, in outside matters, had better take heed to this indication of what they will be easily tempted to do in graver and greater.—Church Union.

—Irate passenger to street-car conductor—"I want you to understand, sir, that you are paid to answer questions. Tell me when we have passed Broad street." Conductor, smilingly—"All right, mum." Conductor, ten minutes later—"We have passed Broad street now, mum. Git off on the right hand side and walk back nine blocks."

—One of the best lessons to be learnt is the absolute necessity of preventing work from degenerating into worry. It is worry that kills for the most part, not work. To learn to put forth our best powers steadily, continuously, in the proper grooves, to the proper ends—this is one of the most precious fruits of wisdom and experience.—Once a Week.

—A moral character is attached to autumnal scenes; the leaves falling like our years, the flowers fading like our hours, the clouds fleeting like our illusions, the light diminishing like our intelligence—and the sun growing colder like our affections, the rivers becoming frozen like our lives—all bear secret relations to our destinies.—N. Y. Ledger.

COWBOY ROPING MATCH.

A Contest in Which the Rider and His Bronco Show to Advantage.

During the recent meeting of the Territorial Stock Growers on the reservation opposite this city, says a Miles City (Mont.) special, there were some roping matches of more than ordinary interest.

Of all cowboy sports, roping contests are the most exciting and call forth more skill and agility than the man who has never visited the far West can easily appreciate.

When a contest of this kind is arranged a piece of ground is selected, care being taken that it is level, and free from any dog holes, rocks or brush that might bring down a horse while running at full speed and injure both it and its rider.

A bunch of thirty or forty lively young steers, full of grit, are then driven up by three cowboys, two of whom hold the bunch while the third "cuts out" the animals one by one for the contest.

Time-keepers are appointed, and the first competitor comes forward on his pony. He takes his stand forty or fifty feet from the bunch, and a fine picture he generally makes, with his big white hat, his spurs and his lasso. Then a steer is cut out from the bunch and started on a run.

At a given signal the cutter-out pulls up his bronco in the proverbial four feet of space, and the competitor dashes after the steer.

A sharp race follows, and the second the cowboy gets near enough he swings the rope above his head, takes careful aim and circles it around the steer's horns. In an instant the bronco stops, suddenly bringing the steer to a halt.

Then the horse runs round the steer, which is promptly thrown. The rider fastens the rope to the horn of the saddle and dismounts, leaving the horse to hold down the steer, which it invariably does by sitting down on its haunches and bracing itself with its forelegs.

The cowboy proceeds to tie the steer's hind legs, and the moment he has it done his task is completed and the time is taken. Each competitor follows in turn, and the one making the quickest time is proclaimed the winner.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

THE SPECKLED HEN.

Dear brother Ben, I take my pen
To tell you where, and how, and when
I found the nest of our speckled hen.

She would never lay in a sensible way,
Like other hens, in the barn on the hay,
But here and there, and everywhere,
On the stable floor, and the woodhouse stair;

And once on the ground her eggs I found;
But yesterday I ran away,
With mother's leave in the barn to play.

The sun shone bright on the seedy floor,
And the doves so white were a pretty sight,
And they walked in and out of the open door,
With their little red feet and their feathers neat,
Cooing and cooing more and more.

Well, I went out to look about
On the platform wide, where, side by side,
I could see the pig-pens in their pride;
And beyond them both, on a narrow shelf
I saw the speckled hen hide herself
Behind a pile of hoes and rakes,
And pieces of board and broken stakes.

Ah! ha! old hen, I have found you now,
But to reach your nest I don't know how,
Unless I could creep, or climb, or crawl
Along the edge of the pig-pen wall.

And while I stood in a thoughtful mood,
The speckled hen cackled as loud as she could,
And flew away, as much as to say:
"For once my treasure is out of your way."

I didn't wait a moment, then;
I wouldn't be conquered by that old hen!
But along the edge of the slippery ledge
I carefully crept, for the great pigs slept,
And I dared not even look to see
If they were thinking of eating me.

But all at once, oh, what a dunce!
I dropped my basket into the pen—
The one you gave me, brother Ben;
There were two eggs in it, by the way,
That I found in the manger, under the hay.

Then the pigs got up and ran about
With a noise between a grunt and a shout;
And when I saw them rooting, rooting,
Of course I slipped and lost my footing,
And tripped, and jumped, and finally fell
Right down among the pigs, pellmell.

For once in my life I was afraid;
For the door that led out into the shed
Was fastened tight with an iron hook,
And father was down in the field by the brook,
Hoeing and weeding his rows of corn,
And here was his Polly, so scared and forlorn;
But I called him, and called him, as loud as I could.
I knew he would hear me—he must, and he should.
"O father! O father!—get out, you old pig!
O father! oh! oh—" for their mouths are so big—
Then I waited a moment and called him again:
"O father! O father! I am in the pig-pen!"
And father did hear, and he threw down his hoe,
And scampered as fast as a father could go.
The pigs had pushed me close to the wall,
And munched up basket, eggs and all,
And chewed my sunbonnet into a ball,
And one had rubbed his muddy nose
All over my apron, clean and white;
And they snuffed me and stepped upon my toes,
But hadn't taken the smallest bite,
When father opened the door at last,
And oh, in his arms he held me fast.]

—The Voice.

HOW THE ALARM WAS GIVEN.

A Brave Little Girl's Presence of Mind—A True Story.

Bertha's dull pencil left awkward figures in its track across the slate. This would not do, for Miss Elvo insisted upon neatness as well as accuracy in the work of her pupils. Bertha, therefore, with a distressed little pucker between her dark eyebrows, raised her hand.

"Well," said Miss Elvo, looking at her.

"My pencil is very dull—may I go out and sharpen it?" she said.

It was the custom within this great brick school building, known as "No. 4," to have the pencils put in perfect working condition before school was called in the morning. Then they were passed around in a neat box, and each pupil took out her own. In some mysterious way Bertha's pencil had escaped the sharpening process, and its hard-worked point of the previous day was unfit for use. Miss Elvo looked in the box for an unclaimed pencil, but a rare occurrence—the box was empty. She therefore granted a somewhat unwilling consent to Bertha's petition.

Bertha tip-toed across the floor, shut the poor softly and went through the long hall to the back door and into the chill winter air. Standing in a sheltered corner on the back porch, she began to sharpen her pencil. While working away busily she took her eyes a moment from her task and immediately discovered a thin curl of smoke issuing from one of the basement windows. It could mean but one thing—the building was on fire! Her decision was immediately taken. Only the night before she had heard her father explain to her brother how to give a "still alarm." How glad she was that she had listened attentively to his instructions, for it was now, above all things, necessary to have the fire company arrive quietly without alarming the pupils. There was a telephone in the store on the corner, and in less than five minutes the message had reached the chief of the fire department, and Bertha was speeding on her way back to the school building. She paused a few moments in the hall, near the door of the room where she belonged, to quiet her rapid breathing and calm her frightened face. When she entered her room, instead of going to her seat, she went straight to the teacher's desk. Miss Elvo admired and loved her; she was one of those delightful children who are always heartily in earnest in their undertakings. There was nothing unusual in her appearance now save a glint in her dark eyes and a small red spot on either cheek. From these signs Miss Elvo, who was a keen observer, allowed her to step upon the rostrum unchecked. She turned her back upon the school and said in a low, but distinct, whisper:

"Miss Elvo, there is a fire in the basement; I have been to the corner and sent in a 'still alarm.'"

Miss Elvo's cheek paled a little, but she took a pencil immediately and wrote on a scrap of paper:

"Dismiss your pupils quietly, but as speedily as possible. MISS ELVO."

She handed this to Bertha, saying in a low voice:

"You are a brave girl. Show this paper to each teacher in the building as quietly and promptly as you have done the rest, and all, I trust, will be well."

She then turned to the desk and gave the signal for closing work. The pupils, who were poring over their problems in fractions, were surprised, but were too well drilled to give other than prompt obedience. The implements of work were put by, the pupils rose, filed out, and in five minutes the building was empty, Miss Elvo, herself, as principal, moving softly about and quietly helping matters along. When the last pupil was gone, her thoughts reverted to Bertha. She looked in the dressing-room belonging to the division. Yes, there hung the well-known gray "pussy" hood with its blue trimmings, and the long warm sack that belonged with it, but where could Bertha be?

"She has proved that she could take care of herself," was Miss Elvo's consolatory thought, and as she had privately told the teachers to assemble in the lower hall when the pupils were gone, she hastened down to meet them. They were all there, and the story of the sudden suspension of school duties was soon told.

"We must do something," said the first assistant, looking vaguely about and wringing her hands, but at that moment they heard the fire-engine roll up. The chief alighted from his horse, and was met in the hall by the bevy of teachers. When, after a respose to his inquiries, he started for the basement they followed him.

There, smeared and wet, and surrounded by the now decreasing smoke, stood Bertha throwing water upon the burning woodwork and joists. It had caught from a defective flue leading from the furnace to the register above, the temporary closing of which had prevented the escape of the smoke into the hall. She had carried the water, in a large tin pail, from the hydrant in the yard, but a few steps from the door leading down to the basement.

Although she had not succeeded in quenching the fire entirely, she had prevented it from spreading by keeping the surrounding woodwork wet, and with a very little effort on the part of the firemen it was soon entirely extinguished.

Much praise was showered upon Bertha for her bravery and wisdom, but I think her first wise step was in giving careful attention and picking up a new scrap of knowledge, for without it even her bravery would have been useless perhaps.—Clara J. Denton, in Christian at Work.

ENGLISH DESERTERS.

The Causes Inducing Them to Abandon Military Service.

Pure and simple dislike to the service seems to be the common cause for desertion, but it is interesting to note the reasons given by deserters themselves for the extreme course they have adopted. The chaplain of a London prison some time ago made an attempt to find out from the 616 men confined there for desertion the causes which had induced them to abandon the colors. Of this number 161 informed him that they had left the army because they fervently hated the life which they found themselves obliged to lead; 114 confessed that drink had been the cause of their misbehavior; 100 that they had deserted "to better themselves;" 72 urged that they had allowed themselves to be influenced by the persuasions of bad companions; 51 had gone on the spree, had overstayed their leave, and had not been able to pluck up courage to return to their regiments, through fear of the consequences of their indiscretion; 48 had been so badgered by their comrades, or had found the treatment of the non-commissioned officers so harsh, that they had been driven to seek a refuge in flight; 41 had absented themselves for some cause or other, and disclaimed any real intention of deserting; debt had driven 16 to take the fatal st p; a dozen had run away because leave had been refused them; and, finally, one had absconded because he had been foolish enough to get married without leave.—All The Year Round.

—On a local railroad printed blanks are furnished conductors for use in reporting accidents. It is related that a recent return caused a great laugh in the superintendent's office. Opposite the side-head "disposition" the conductor wrote that the injured passenger was sober and industrious, instead of stating where he was sent. The disposition of the carcass of a cow killed by his train bothered another conductor, for he declared the disposition of the animal was kind and gentle.—Buffalo Express.

—A lady in the Sixth District of Worth County, Ga., hearing that a horseshoe in the fire would keep the hawks from catching her chickens, put one in, but it only made the hawks three times worse. An examination, however, showed that she had made a mistake and got hold of a mule's shoe. A change was promptly made, and now the hawks sit about on trees and look but dare not approach the forbidden land.—Macon Telegraph.

—A new "society manual" gives thirteen ways of popping the question. The average man could never think of even one stereotyped "way" when the critical moment came, if the girl was pretty and he wanted her very much. It is a kind of warfare which does not give premeditated action much of a show.

—Speaking of the weather, a warm spring may be anticipated when a man sits on a hot flatiron placed on a chair by his wife.—Norristown Herald.